

Report of
FIRST
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Permanent Committee

ON

EDUCATION FOR THE MINISTRY :

PRESENTED TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

AT CLEVELAND, O., MAY 23, 1857.

New-York :

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1857.

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

THE Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry, held its first meeting in the city of New-York, on the 19th day of June last, and was organized by the appointment of Rev. John J. Owen, as Chairman, Jesse W. Benedict, as Recording Secretary, and Joseph B. Sheffield, as Treasurer. The Committee then proceeded to divide themselves, as directed, into three classes, as follows :

TO SERVE ONE YEAR : John J. Owen, Jonathan F. Stearns, George Duffield, Jr., Jesse W. Benedict, and William Jessup.

TO SERVE TWO YEARS : George L. Prentiss, John Jenkins, Harvey Curtis, Wm. A. Booth, and Wm. Darling.

TO SERVE THREE YEARS : Asa D. Smith, Henry Smith, Joseph B. Sheffield, Walter S. Griffith, and Anson G. Phelps.

The term of the first class expires with the present meeting of the General Assembly, and an election will be required to fill their places.

The Chairman was directed to prepare a statement for publication informing the churches of the establishment and objects of the Permanent Committee ; and measures were adopted to inquire for a suitable person to fill the office of General Secretary. On the 25th day of September following, Rev. Thornton A. Mills, of the Presbytery of Indianapolis, was appointed to that office. He signified his acceptance about the close of the year, but owing to pastoral engagements, was unable to enter on his duties previous to the first of March last. The late period at which the Committee thus became prepared for efficient action, and the necessity in inaugurating a new method of united and systematic operation for the whole Church, of having a somewhat extended correspondence and comparison of views, have precluded any efforts on a wide scale the past year. The Secretary has been employed in acquiring information, and maturing plans for future action, and in presenting the subject to such Presbyteries and churches as were accessible while he was thus engaged. At his entrance on his duties he addressed a circular to the Stated Clerk of each Presbytery inquiring what has been attempted or accomplished in behalf of Education for the Ministry the past year throughout the churches. Before this circular was sent, several Presbyteries had held their regular Semi-Annual Meetings, which rendered it difficult to procure the information sought ; and no similar reports having been previously required from Presbyteries, in most cases such information would not be at hand, so that the Committee could not anticipate the present year full responses on every point.

They are gratified to state that returns have been received from the Stated Clerks of sixty-five Presbyteries, and they regret that their communication, though made in carrying out the wishes of the last Assembly, has received no attention from the remainder; several of the inquiries could have been answered from the personal knowledge of the Clerks themselves. In a few cases returns were forwarded but not received.

But a partial view can be given at this time of what the churches are doing, but the Committee hope next year to be able to present a full tabular report showing the condition of the work in every Presbytery.

Condition of the Work throughout the Church.

Returns have been received from the Presbyteries of Albany, Angelica, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chenango, Chemung, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Genesee, Hudson, Long Island, Lyons, North River, Onondaga, Otsego, Rochester, St. Lawrence, and Watertown, in New-York; Philadelphia, 4th, Harrisburgh, Erie, Meadville, and Pittsburgh, Pa.; Newark and Rockaway in N. J.; Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Elyria, Franklin, Hamilton, Pataskala, Portage, Scioto, and Trumbull, in Ohio; Fort Wayne, Greencastle, Madison, and Salem, in Indiana; Belvidere, Chicago, Galena, Ottawa, Schuyler, and Wabash, in Illinois; Detroit, Kalamazoo, and Washtenaw, in Michigan; Dubuque, Iowa City, and Keokuk, in Iowa; Columbus and Fox River, in Wisconsin; Wilmington, in Delaware; Osage, in Missouri; Kingston, Richland, West-Tennessee, and Union, in Tennessee; New-River, Hanover, and Winchester, in Virginia; and Harmony, in Kentucky.

Of these, the Presbyteries of Chicago, Hanover, Harmony, Hudson, Lyons, North River, Portage, St. Lawrence, and Washtenaw, have given this matter attention, so far as to appoint standing committees to inquire after, encourage, and assist indigent young men in their preparation for the ministry, but have no systematic arrangement for presenting it regularly to their churches, and taking yearly collections in its behalf.

The Presbyteries of Newark, N. J., Madison, Ia., and Buffalo, are working systematically, with encouraging results. The Presbyteries of Detroit, Galena, and Rockaway have just determined to coöperate with the Permanent Committee. Other Presbyteries have given the assurance of similar coöperation, after the General Assembly shall have recommended a definite method of united action to the churches. The Presbyteries of Chenango, Delaware, and Otsego, constituting the Synod of Susquehanna, have united in a Synodical arrangement which gives promise of decided usefulness. They have seventeen students in different stages of preparation for the ministry, and have raised in their churches by their own efforts in two years, the sum of \$800. The Presbyteries constituting the Synods of Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, and Wabash, have an Executive Committee established eighteen months since at Cincinnati, which is doing a good work in developing and concentrating the interest of the churches in the central portion of the great West. The reports from the Presbyteries of Cincinnati, Hamilton, Franklin, Pataskala, Scioto, Greencastle, Salem, and Fort Wayne, in these Synods, show that large results may be expected when action shall become general in all the churches and Presbyteries. The Synods of Western Reserve and Iowa have arrangements for their own action, but the Committee are not advised as to the particulars. The Synods of Illinois and

Peoria have taken incipient measures for united action. The Synod of West-Tennessee has also an arrangement for doing its own work, but nothing of interest is reported for the last year. Several churches in different parts of our body have paid their contributions directly to different auxiliaries of the American Educational Society.

In the Presbyteries reporting, the subject of education for the ministry has been, in some form, directly presented to more than 150 churches, and the sum of about \$10,000 has been contributed to aid young men in their studies. There are sixty-three young men in an academic, ninety-seven in a collegiate, and thirty-six in a theological course of preparation for the ministry. There are thirty-seven more whose stage of progress is not designated. Fifty-three are directly under the care of Presbyteries, and will probably be licensed at an early day; and there are thirty-two licentiates. Near two hundred churches are vacant. In many of the Presbyteries there are decidedly promising locations for the establishment of new churches; and there are scores of young men who should be in a course of preparation for the ministry. Though these reports come from about half the Presbyteries, it would not be fair to double their results as an indication of what the whole body is doing; for that part of it only which is actively interested, has reported, and it is to be feared that but a small portion of the remaining part is doing any thing. The Central American Education Society at New-York, with its auxiliary, the Western Education Society at Auburn, and the Philadelphia Education Society, have continued their operations in a portion of our churches. A brief statement of their doings will be found appended to this report. The American Education Society has also directly aided several young men in our churches. The facts exhibited in these reports show that no portion of the Church has done its whole duty; and that there has been a wide-spread and criminal indifference pervading the greater part of it. They indicate, however, a better state of things. If the Committee are not misinformed, the present is a very favorable period for earnest and united effort. The pressure of need was never greater, and the conviction never stronger that something worthy of Christ and the Church ought to be attempted.

As it is the duty assigned the Committee to "superintend the whole cause of education for the ministry in behalf of the General Assembly;" they will now present some facts and suggestions calculated, as they suppose, to aid the Assembly and the churches in the adoption of wise measures in the prosecution of the work.

The History of Educational Measures.

From an early date the original Synods of our Church, and after them, the General Assembly, manifested a decided interest in providing institutions of learning where the rising ministry might be educated, and in encouraging and assisting suitable young men to enter the sacred office. A general Synodical Educational plan was adopted as early as 1771, and afterwards a better one by the General Assembly in 1806. The latter plan was the natural and normal mode of action for the Presbyterian Church on this subject, and had it only been perfected by the appointment of a Central Permanent Committee as a medium of union and mutual sympathy and coöperation between the Presbyteries, as has now been arranged by the

Assembly, nothing more would have been needed in the way of a plan. It was as follows:

"The Assembly do hereby most earnestly recommend to every Presbytery under their care to use their utmost endeavors to increase by all suitable means in their power, the number of promising candidates for the holy ministry; to press upon the parents of pious youth to endeavor to educate them for the Church; on the youth themselves to devote their talents and their lives to the sacred calling; to make vigorous exertions to assist all the youth who may need assistance; to be careful that the youth they take on their funds give such evidence as the nature of the case admits, that they possess both talents and piety; to inspect the education of these youth during the course of both their academical and theological studies, choosing for them such schools, seminaries, and teachers as they may judge most proper and advantageous, so as eventually to bring them into the ministry well furnished for their work. And the Assembly do hereby order that every Presbytery under their care, make annually a report to the Assembly stating particularly what they have done in this concern, or why (if the case shall so be) they have done nothing in it; and that the Assembly will, when these reports are received, consider each distinctly, and decide by vote whether the Presbyteries severally shall be considered as having discharged or neglected their duty in this important business."

For several years the Presbyteries were called on regularly for their reports, and were approved or censured as they had or had not given attention to the Assembly's recommendations. The want, however, of a central agency on the part of the Assembly, led, in 1819, to the establishment of the Board of Education, which, instead of being used as an organization through which the Presbyteries could do their own work, was regarded practically as a measure to relieve them from their direct responsibilities; and which passed into the hands of the Old School body at the disruption of the Church.

Four years previous to the establishment of the Board of Education, the American Education Society came into existence. Its infancy was feeble, but in the course of years it rose to extended and vigorous, though temporary, activity. It became a favorite with a large portion of the Presbyterian Church, and auxiliaries to it were widely established:

"The American Education Society was organized in 1815, the Western Education Society at Auburn in 1817, the Pres. Ed. Society at New-York in 1818, which became the Presbyterian branch of the American Education Society in 1827, the Western Reserve branch of the American Education Society, the Western Education Society at Cincinnati, and the Indiana Branch in 1830, the Illinois Branch and the West-Tennessee Agency, in 1831. During this year the Presbyterian Branch resumed its former title of Presbyterian Education Society, and by arrangement with the Parent Society, assumed the entire administration of its affairs within the territorial limits of the Presbyterian Church, and by its constitution was required to transmit a copy of its annual report to the General Assembly. The East-Tennessee Agency was established in 1832, the Utica Agency in 1833, the Philadelphia Agency in 1834, the Western Education Society for the Valley of the Mississippi, and the Michigan Education Society, in 1835. Coöperation with the German Reformed Synod was established in 1836, and with the Education Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1837. In the same year, the name of the Presbyterian Education Society was changed to that of Central Education Society. The American Education Society for the first ten years of its existence operated in different parts of the United States in a loose, irregular, and desultory manner. Very little agency was employed to advance its interests, and consequently but little progress was made in its operations. In 1826, Rev. Elias Cornelius was appointed Secretary. The number of beneficiaries the first year was seven; the second, 138; in 1828 it was 300; and so rapidly did the number increase, that in 1838, it amounted to 1141. The receipts for that year were \$63,227.

"From this point there was a rapid decline. The Directors in their annual report for 1843, stated that it had been obvious for several years that the cause had been laboring against increasing obstacles—that there seemed to be some indefinable ground of distrust—

not a few had discontinued their annual contributions, and the income from this important source was so much diminished that it was with difficulty the Board could find means for paying appropriations to young men of half the usual amount. A special meeting of the Society had been called in October, 1842, to inquire into the difficulties which embarrassed its operations; and, if possible, apply a remedy. This resulted in a revision of the rules of the Society at the next annual meeting, but still the decline went on, and during the following year, the number of beneficiaries was reduced to 338. This reduction, however, was caused in part by a change in the rules which limited appropriations to students in the collegiate and theological course."*

The subsequent history of these numerous auxiliaries is given in the succeeding extract from the report of the American Education Society for 1852. It says :

"On the broad field occupied by the Parent Society, there are quite a large number of local organizations standing in the relation of direct auxiliaries to us, once active and efficient, but now comparatively silent and inoperative. The tendency for several years has been to leave the care of the great enterprise very much to the Secretary and Board of Directors at Boston; so that many of these auxiliaries, while their names and their outward organizations have remained, have been undergoing a process of gradual and silent absorption into the Parent Society. This is a process which 'not enriches' us and makes them 'poor indeed.' The life and vigor of the whole will be proportioned to the life and vigor of the parts. It is very much to be desired that a new spirit should be infused into these almost inactive forms. The river may continue to run for a time after the springs in the mountains begin to fail; but unless they renew their flow, its channel must eventually become dry."

The process of decline thus sketched has not diminished, and of all the auxiliaries of the American Education Society once flourishing in the bounds of the Presbyterian Church, but three remain; and their reports show that the countenance they receive from the churches and Presbyteries is very limited.

Different reasons may be assigned for this fact, but the principal doubtless is, that a work like this, which, by the divine arrangement, is but a natural outgrowth of the Christian life of the Church, can not be separated from direct connection with the Church itself, and committed to another agency and yet be prosecuted with long-continued vigor and success. To love this work warmly and unchangeably, the Church *herself* must do it, *not as an ecclesiastical but a Christian duty*. No society external to her, though composed of her members, can long insure her hearty, constant, and becoming coöperation. She will do too little and expect too much from it; and there is always danger of injurious friction arising from the operation of two bodies on the same field. It is also a question whether the novelty connected with this movement, and the external pressure brought to bear in its behalf, did not produce an unhealthy degree of activity, which could not, from the nature of the case, be of protracted duration.

Causes of Decrease in the Ministry.

These will be clearly apparent to any one who has carefully studied the history of educational efforts and the condition of the Church at the present time.

* For this statement, which contains the results of extended and careful investigation, the Secretary is indebted to Rev. Theron Baldwin, Secretary of the Society for Promoting Collegiate and Theological Education in the West.

1. It should be inquired whether the Church has not tempted God in this matter? The idea of saving sinful men is a divine one, and the Holy Spirit alone can effectually and pervadingly implant it in the heart. God's glory is most highly concerned in it, and in granting his Spirit he must be recognized as a Sovereign. Blessings indifferently sought, ungratefully received, or negligently improved, he either withholds altogether, or withdraws after they have been conferred. With reference to the ministry it is deserving of most serious consideration whether this ascension gift of Christ is valued according to His estimate, and is sought with becoming intensity of desire? Whether His command to "pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers" does not lie upon the conscience of the Church with all the awful guilt of a constantly violated obligation? Whether the divine sovereignty and efficiency in calling and qualifying men for the ministry has not been overshadowed in the minds of the churches by the machinery of Educational Societies and institutions, and the divine unction substituted by human instructions? Whether the tendency of our general method of ministerial education is not to render the ministry, in the worldly acceptation of the words, a profession, and an order, subject to conventional regulations, rather than the living repositories and dispensers of living truth which is designed to bring all things into subordination to Christ? Whether a large part of the Church in different ways does not require the sacrifice of true Christian independence in the ministry, and the substitution of the humanitarian for the divine; of polished essays for direct and pungent appeals, of literary excellence for earnest, solemn argument; of the æsthetic and intellectual for the spiritual; much to the grief of the Holy Spirit? Whether the divisions and party strifes between churches holding substantially the same faith, leading them in competition to crowd two or more ministers into small fields where not more than one is needed, and to leave wide regions destitute, is not a waste and misapplication of labor disapproved of by the Master? Whether the limited, inadequate, inequitable support, uncertainly and unpunctually paid to the ministry, is satisfactory in the sight of Him who has "ordained that they who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel?" If in these, or other particulars, the Church has tempted Him who alone can give her a ministry, it will not be difficult to see, as in the light of noonday, one reason of the diminution of its numbers.

2. A second cause is that owing to the manifold excitements and the worldliness of the times, the evangelical interest of the churches is deplorably low; and indifference to the Gospel is followed by consequent indifference to the divinely appointed means for spreading it.

3. The temptations placed before young men to engage in secular pursuits, are multiform and powerful; and in many cases so weighty as to overcome their sense of duty, their feeble love to Christ and their dim apprehensions of eternity; while the protracted period of struggle in preparatory studies, and the expense of obtaining an education, which they are ill able to meet, and the mean support expected after they reach the ministry, often turn many from this work.

4. The fact that some years since, in a strife between certain educational organizations to excel each other in introducing the largest number of young men into the ministry, some were educated and introduced into it without suitable qualifications, who have not particularly honored it, has improperly created a feeling of indifference in many minds as to the whole subject, and has also produced the false impression that there are more ministers now than are needed.

5. No suitable effort has been made to keep the attention of the churches turned to the *whole* subject of increasing the ministry, and the scriptural arrangements to promote it. Nearly all that has been attempted has been by Education Societies, which are limited to the special work of aiding young men whose circumstances require assistance, and this is only a small part of what needs to be done. The last report of the American Education Society states that about one third of the Congregational and New School Presbyterian ministers now in the field, were at some time aided by it. Perhaps one sixth more received aid from other quarters, leaving one half of the ministry who have entered it upon their own resources. The efforts to reach the portion of the Church from which the latter half comes, have of late been almost entirely suspended, and the transfer of all active responsibility in the work to Education Societies alone, has unhappily produced the impression that none but the indigent are expected to enter the ministry, and that all obligations to them are discharged by limited and transient contributions for their support. In the New Testament, while the characteristics of the ministry are plainly exhibited, nothing is said of the manner in which it is to be raised up. The reason of this apparent omission is, that the ministry is but a natural outgrowth of the Christian life of the Church. If she is vigorously alive to Christ, she will not want candidates for the sacred office, they will naturally present themselves; if she is cold and enfeebled, they will be obtained slowly and with difficulty. The work of training a ministry belongs to the Christian family, to the local church, to the Sabbath-school teacher, to the ministry itself. Every family should live in such an exalted atmosphere of piety that its inmates who are qualified, would naturally think of entering the ministry. Every church should aim so to enjoy and obey the Gospel, that young men on entering its communion would feel that they have something to do for Christ, and that if they have suitable gifts to become public instructors, they should enter this as the work in which they can most efficiently glorify him. Every minister should honor and pursue his vocation in such a manner as to impress young men so favorably with regard to it, that they will desire to enter it. Thus, by the ordinary course of Christian living may the ministry be increased as well as by more direct efforts. Instead of attempting this work herself under a just sense of her responsibility, our Church has left it to organizations of limited range, and has appeared satisfied with their imperfect efforts. It is neither organization nor machinery which is now wanted, **IT IS LIFE.** Until the Church undertakes this duty as one of divine and untransferable obligation, she can not expect to have an adequate ministry. The whole subject must claim her unwearied, prayerful attention, and most zealous activity.

The Remedy.

The remedy for this evil state of things the Committee suppose must be two-fold.

1. The Church must be enlightened and aroused, so that she will make this work a prominent part of her daily prayers and labors, doing it by no second-hand arrangements, but directly, efficiently, and systematically.

2. The Churches, Presbyteries, and Synods, in connection with the Assembly, need a simple, comprehensive, and efficient plan of operation in consistency with the genius of our system, which, while it will bind none by

authority, and will leave each free to act in the manner it deems best, will afford a medium of union, sympathy, and coöperation, so that a mutual interest shall be created, and the assistance of the strong may be secured in behalf of the weak. It may be said that this arrangement is very general and too indefinite to be relied on. But if the spirit of Christ can be awakened, it will prove so efficient that no other will be needed, and without that spirit none could succeed. It simply lays this great obligation to train up a ministry, where the Master has placed it, upon the consciences and hearts of individual Christians and churches, and assumes that it is neither wise nor right to separate duties from those on whom they are laid, and provide agencies to perform this or any other work, on the principle that Christ's people are not expected to do his will. Such substitutes for making duty easy by transfer, he never honors, and sooner or later, they fail of permanent good, and sink into disuse.

The Committee, though representing the Assembly, have neither advisory nor controlling power over the Presbyteries, and as they feel that Presbyterian action is not only desirable but absolutely necessary, they respectfully suggest to the Assembly the adoption of the statements and resolutions appended to this report, which if carried out faithfully, will answer all present purposes. They also append for the information and approbation of the Assembly, the rules they have adopted for aiding young men in their preparatory studies for the ministry.

There are many topics of consequence to which the Committee might further ask the attention of the Assembly, but they prefer to speak of them hereafter in the light of observation and experience, rather than to theorize upon them now. Should the general plan suggested receive the decided indorsement of the Assembly, the labors of a year in urging its practical adoption, will show both its advantages and defects, and open the way for its being perfected. It is sufficiently extended and definite for a commencement, and is commended by the fact that nearly all that is now attempted or intended by the Presbyteries, is in substantial accordance with it.

Reasons for the Adoption of this Plan.

A statement of the reasons which commend this plan to the churches will close this report.

1. It is preëminently evangelical, for it will make the increase of the ministry grow out of the living Christianity of the Church. It includes the whole subject—not simply the assisting of those who need help, but the duty of all concerned, both rich and poor, of parents, of young men, of ministers and churches, and addresses the highest class of motives to all.

2. It is Presbyterian. It proposes to use our extended and admirable system of polity, not for the settlement of matters of discipline alone, nor for the transaction of a dull routine of formal business pertaining to the externals of the Church, but for the nobler end of directly diffusing the Gospel. We have a system of superior adaptation for doing this work, and why should we not use it? By it we can have just such a ministry as we desire, without committing its training to foreign hands. For an organization already wisely arranged, and in active operation to go out of itself, and transfer its own duties to another every way its inferior, must diminish the sense of personal responsibility and limit greatly the favorable results. It is an effort to shift responsibility which the Master will not approve.

This plan is in full accordance with the genius of our system. It does not propose a great central organization to undertake the work of the Church, but a central medium through which the churches may communicate with and assist each other, and perform their own work. A medium for the whole body, which every part may equally command according to its necessities. Centralization is not in accordance with the genius of Presbytery. It has but one central power, and that is Christ, and he dwells and works in every part; but union and coöperation by all as equal members of the same family is the fundamental idea of our great organization, and this plan is conformed to it.

3. It is a plan which promises growing efficiency. Our interest in divine things does not come abstractly first, and prompt to duty, but grows with our Christian activity; and the more our churches can be led to do directly for this cause the greater will be their interest in it. In self-development under God must be our hope.

4. It will be most economical. The Executive Committee of the Synods of Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, and Wabash, during the first year of its existence, collected from the churches under a plan substantially the same, and only partially carried out, the sum of \$1847, at the trifling expense of \$28.50. And the whole Presbyterian Church, by the system now proposed, may do its educational work, have the subject properly presented, contributions taken in the churches, and tens of thousands of dollars raised and disbursed with but little more expense than will be necessary to keep up the operations of the Permanent Committee in New-York as a general bond of union, sympathy, and coöperation.

5. It will be a permanent plan. All Societies necessarily depend upon their executive officers; and however efficient a secretary may be, when he resigns, or fails, or dies, the work in a great measure ceases. But this plan depends on no one man for its efficiency. If intelligently adopted, it will have men in every part of the Church carrying it out for Christ's sake. It will possess just as much permanency and vigor as the working piety of the Church.

6. This plan is demanded by the exigencies of the Church in its different localities. The experience of years has demonstrated that no one part of the Church can for a long time well furnish a ministry for another. Our country is so wide, and its settlement so rapid, the tastes of our people vary so much, the difficulty of adaptation on the part of ministers is often so great, and the effects of a change of climate so injurious to health, that the great dependence of each part, after it is fairly settled, must be in training up an indigenous ministry for itself; and this plan proposes to have every church and Presbytery at its formation commence this work, with the encouragement from the older and more favored churches, that if they will do all which could be expected of them under their circumstances, they shall not want the means to carry on their operations.

7. The want of a ministry at the present, and the increase of that want before it can be met, calls for prayer and effort on the part of every friend of truth. The number of candidates for the ministry in the Congregational theological schools of New-England in 1840, was 323, while the number in the same schools in 1856 was only 170; presenting the alarming fact, that while the population of the United States had increased 10,000,000, the candidates for the ministry, in the region best supplied with churches, have diminished nearly one half. The number of young men now annually intro-

duced into the ministry in New-England, is barely sufficient to supply the waste caused by the failure of health and by death among her clergy, and does not allow her to give one to the great West or the world beside, without impoverishing herself; and there is no reason to suppose that, with her superior advantages, she is behind other portions of the Church. - In our own Church, in the newer sections of the country, it is no strange thing for two, three, and sometimes four churches to be supplied by one minister, and after these are counted as supplied, about one fifth of the whole number of our churches are entirely vacant. A late number of the *Home Missionary* states that the American Home Missionary Society will soon be under the necessity of reducing the missionary churches of New-York and New-England to the condition of those in the West, and place two or more under the care of one minister, in order to prevent them from being entirely deprived of the institutions of the Gospel. In many parts of our country church extension is impossible, on account of this great want, and even church existence is imperilled. Our feeble and vacant churches are becoming discouraged and dying out, and we are threatened in many places with a "famine of the words of the Lord." With such facts so humiliating, startling, and full of foreboding, will not the General Assembly, the Synods, the Presbyteries, the churches, the ministers, and people, all awake to pray, and to put forth such earnest, continuous, self-denying efforts, as will prove their prayer to be sincere and availing?

Submitted in behalf of the Permanent Committee,

THORNTON A. MILLS, *General Secretary.*

New-York, May 1857.

SOCIETIES OPERATING IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Central American Education Society.

During the year which closed with the 30th of April last—the 39th year of the Society's existence—the whole number of young men aided from its funds was 113, and from those of its several Auxiliaries, which have reported, about 42; making 155 in all.

The number receiving assistance at the beginning of the 40th year is, from this Society, 73, and from its Auxiliaries, about 38; the total being 111.

The funds of this Society, received from all sources, during the 39th year, have amounted to \$10,702.63: and the disbursements, to \$11,103.52—of which \$9740 have been paid in appropriations to the young men under patronage—the appropriation to each being \$25 the quarter, or \$100 the year.

The Treasury, at the commencement of the 40th year, on the first day of the present month, was more than \$400 in debt.

Western Education Society.

This is the organ of the Synods of Utica, Susquehanna, Onondaga, Geneya, and Genesee. It was established in 1817. Its last annual meeting was held in Auburn, June 17, 1857, in connection with the anniversary of the Theological Seminary. During the last year an act of incorporation was obtained directly from the

Legislature, which was accepted by the Society. This makes no change in its character, objects, or functions, and merely gives it power to choose a Board of Trustees to hold and manage such permanent funds as may be given or bequeathed on its field for ministerial education.

During the past two years the interest on this subject has been decidedly on the increase on this field, and the effort on the part of the Secretary has been to lead the churches to act on the principles now recommended by the Assembly. About 60 young men within its limits are receiving assistance, forty-one of these are paid directly from its treasury, the others are aided by Presbyteries, churches, and individuals.

The contributions raised by this Society last year amounted to \$3684.43; and it received in addition \$1300 from the Central American Education Society. Its expenditures were \$5335.44, of which \$4093.76 were paid to students.

The following resolutions were adopted:

1. *Resolved*, That the Western Education Society considers itself the organization of the western half of the State of New-York, upon the plan adopted by the last two General Assemblies; that we declare ourselves in the closest sympathy with their interests, and that we will return an Annual Report to the General Assembly. 2. That as the raising up of an efficient ministry is the cause most vital to the prosperity of the Church, we urge every congregation visited by our Secretary to contribute to this object in at least equal measure with other objects of Christian benevolence; and we request every church which the Agent can not visit to take up and remit to him a generous contribution to this cause.

The Philadelphia Education Society.

This Society aided last year sixty-seven young men, twenty-eight of whom were in their theological course, namely, at Lane Seminary, 21; at Union, 6; at Auburn, 1. Thirty-five are in their collegiate course, at the following institutions: Marietta, 11; Delaware, 6; Yellow Springs, Iowa, 6; Hamilton, 1; Knox, Ill., 3; Maryville, Tenn., 4; Caldwell, Tenn., 2; Meadville, Pa., 1; Miami University, 1. Four are in an academic course.

The Treasurer's account was as follows:

Balance on hand last year,	\$3253 93
Receipts	3867 27
Total,	7121 20
Disbursements,	5978 45
Balance in Treasury,	1142 75

Action of the General Assembly on the First Annual Report of the Permanent Committee, May 28, 1857.

Resolved, That the General Assembly recognizes with gratitude to God, the organization of the Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry, the appointment of a General Secretary, Rev. Thornton A. Mills, who has entered on the duties of his office; and also, the fact that the Report of the Committee presents and enforces the foundation principles of this work, especially in its relation to churches and Presbyteries.

Resolved, That while the Assembly feels the importance of a thorough organization of the Church for the accomplishment of the work of ministerial education, it is at the same time deeply convinced that success will not attend the enterprise unless the earnest efforts of its friends are united with prayer to God that by the abundant outpouring of his Spirit the life of the Church may be made more vigorous, and large numbers of the youth of our land be converted to Christ.

Resolved, That the General Assembly recommends the observance of the las

Thursday in February as a day of prayer for the blessing of God on our various institutions of learning.

Resolved, That the Report of the Permanent Committee be published under their direction and circulated through all the churches.

Plan recommended by the General Assembly for the action of Presbyteries.

Resolved, That the Assembly, deeply impressed with the importance of a plan of action which shall develop the resources of the whole Church, and bring each section of the Church to the work of training its own ministry, adopts the arrangement recommended in the Report of the Permanent Committee, with some additions and alterations, in the following form:

1. It is the duty of the Church in obedience to the Saviour's last command to preach the Gospel to every creature, to give constant and becoming attention to the increase of the Ministry.

2. The Presbyterian Church, in its Congregations, Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly, possesses a superior system of means for conducting this work in a most successful manner.

3. It is particularly desirable that each Presbytery should make the subject of the Ministry a topic of serious consideration in its stated meetings at least once every year, and adopt arrangements to have presented to the churches, through their own ministers as far as possible, the wants of our Church, our country, and the world, in this respect; to press on young men their duty to give themselves to this work, on parents their obligation to dedicate their children to it and train them for it; and on individual churches their privilege and duty to see that all their sons who give promise of suitable qualifications for the ministry are sought out and encouraged to enter it; and to make adequate provision for the education of all such as are in circumstances to need their aid, and who show by their characters and improvement that they are worthy of it, and to see that in each church an annual collection is made in behalf of this cause.

4. It is important that the claims of the Christian ministry on pious young men in a course of education, should be publicly presented once every year in all the Colleges within our bounds; and it is recommended that the General Secretary, in connection with the officers in these institutions secure the performance of this service.

5. While the General Assembly does not design to interfere with the action of separate churches and Presbyteries, or the combined action of a number of them in their Synodical capacity, it decidedly recommends its Permanent Committee as the bond of union and medium of coöperation in this work; and it is hereby urged upon each Presbytery and Synod, whether coöperating or not with that Committee, to forward through its Stated Clerk, to said Permanent Committee, at some time in the month of April in each year, a full report of its doings, in reply to such questions as may be proposed to it, and the information so given shall be embodied in the Annual Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

6. Each Presbytery designing to coöperate with the Permanent Committee shall appoint annually a Standing Committee on Education for the Ministry, whose duty it shall be to examine and recommend, in the vacation of Presbytery, such young men as require assistance from the funds at the disposal of the Permanent Committee; and to exercise over them such pastoral supervision as may be possible while they are prosecuting their studies. And all such Committees are hereby enjoined to give strict attention to the rules prescribed by the Permanent Committee in any recommendation they may make, so as to avert dishonor from this enterprise of the Church, and avoid the waste and misapplication of its funds.

7. Every Presbytery coöperating with the Permanent Committee, by presenting the subject to its churches annually, and taking collections to be paid into the General Treasury, shall be entitled, as far as the means placed at the disposal of

that Committee will allow, to receive aid for all candidates for the Ministry under its care, however much the appropriations to them may exceed the contributions of such Presbytery.

8. It is recommended to all the churches so to arrange their contributions to benevolent operations that the uniform time for that in behalf of Education for the Ministry shall be the Sabbath preceding or succeeding the last Thursday in February of each year, the day of the Annual Concert of Prayer for Colleges.

9. As it is desirable that this cause should assume a prominent and permanent place in the contributions of the churches, it is recommended to those whom Providence has favored with means, to endow temporary Scholarships by the contribution of the requisite sum each year to assist a student through his Theological course; or the contribution of such a sum each year to assist one through his literary and theological course, or by the establishment of permanent Scholarships by donations or legacies, under the management of the Permanent Committee; and to afford facility and security in doing this, the Permanent Committee are hereby directed to apply to the Legislature of the State of New-York for a suitable act of incorporation. And till such act is obtained, individuals designing permanent gifts or legacies are requested to place them in the legal charge of the Trustees of the Presbyterian House in Philadelphia for the use of the Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry.

10. The General Assembly would not claim any authority over the institutions where our Ministry are educated; but it is hereby requested of the Faculties of the Union and Auburn Theological Seminary in New-York; of Lane Seminary, near Cincinnati, and Maryville Seminary, in Tennessee, and of any other similar institutions hereafter established, to furnish the General Assembly each year through its Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry, with a written statement of their condition, advantages, and prospects, the names of their Professors, the ordinary yearly expenses, and any other matters of general interest to the Church, to be read to the Assembly, and published as an appendix to the Annual Report of the said Committee; and the General Secretary is hereby charged with the duty of presenting this request annually to said Faculties in time to receive their written reports before the meeting of the General Assembly.

Plan for granting aid Approved by the General Assembly.

Resolved, That this General Assembly approves the Rules adopted by the Permanent Committee for aiding young men in their preparatory studies for the ministry, with some alterations—as fitted to prevent the introduction of incompetent and unworthy young men to this office, and at the same time to afford suitable encouragement to those whose piety and talents give promise of usefulness. When any alterations are made in these rules the Permanent Committee are requested to report the same to the Assembly.

RULES FOR AIDING YOUNG MEN.

1. Each applicant for assistance shall present a certificate from a Presbytery (or its Standing Committee on Education) stating that he has been in the communion of the Church at least one year, and that he has been carefully examined as to his experimental piety, his motives in desiring the sacred office, his attachment to the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, his general habits, his prudence, his talents, his studies, his gifts for public speaking, his disposition to do all in his power to sustain himself, his need of assistance, and his willingness to observe the rules of the Committee. Such certificate must also state whether the candidate is in his Academic, Collegiate, or Theological course, and the amount requisite to carry him through the first year.

2. While it is highly desirable that all who receive assistance should be under

the supervision of the Presbyteries to which they would naturally belong, and should be recommended by them, yet if owing to the present position of the Education cause, or other important reasons, a Presbyterian certificate can not be obtained, it may, at the option of the Permanent Committee, be substituted by a certificate of the same import, from any Examining Committee appointed for such purposes at any educational institution where the student is pursuing his course.

3. The amount granted to any applicant shall not, unless, in very peculiar circumstances, exceed eighty dollars for the Academic, one hundred dollars for the Collegiate, and one hundred and twenty for the Theological course per annum,* to be paid in quarterly installments upon the return of schedules to be filled up by the student and his instructors; and the approbation of the same by the Permanent Committee.

4. Each applicant shall give a receipt or acknowledgment to the Treasurer for the amount which from time to time he may receive, promising to repay the same with interest, if he fail to enter upon the work of the ministry within a reasonable time, or turn aside to any secular pursuit, unless the Presbytery to which he belongs, certify that there are good reasons for his relinquishing the active duties of the office, and recommend the cancelling of the obligation.

5. Individuals receiving aid shall be under the pastoral supervision of the Presbyteries recommending them, and also of the General Secretary of the Permanent Committee, and will be expected to undergo renewed examinations on passing from one grade of their general course to another.

6. No payment shall be made in advance.

7. As the appropriations of the Committee are made on the principle of helping those who help themselves, and are insufficient for the entire support of a student, it is expected that the student and his friends will make all proper exertions to assist in defraying the expenses of his education.

8. Each student aided is required to pursue a thorough course of study preparatory to a three years' course of Theological studies, unless the Permanent Committee and Presbytery under whose care he is, in the exercise of a wise discretion, shall decide that his circumstances require that his studies shall be abbreviated.

9. When any student shall find it necessary to relinquish study for a time to teach or otherwise increase his means of support, he shall first obtain the consent of the Permanent Committee; and if he shall not be absent from study more than three months, his appropriations will be continued—but if longer, they will be discontinued, or continued in part according to circumstances.

10. When a student has ceased for a period longer than a year to receive assistance from the Committee, he shall be required to produce new testimonials before his name can be restored to the roll.

11. When the official relation between a student and the Committee ceases, or is about to cease, he is required to notify the General Secretary of the fact, stating the reason.

12. The reception of an appropriation by a student shall be considered as expressing a promise to comply with all the rules and regulations of the Committee.

13. If at any time there be discovered in any student such defect in capacity, diligence, prudence, and especially in piety, as would render his introduction into

* These are the rates originally adopted by the Permanent Committee. The General Assembly recommended that there should be an advance on each of twenty dollars. The Committee will be happy to comply with this recommendation, as soon as they can be assured that the interest of the churches in the movement will justify them in doing so. With the prevailing indifference on this subject, the Committee would consider it perilous to the work to undertake a compliance with the recommendation at the very beginning of their operations. The rates adopted are the same in all respects, with those of the Old School Board of Education, and, for the theological course are twenty per cent in advance of those of the American Education Society.

the ministry a doubtful measure, it shall be considered the sacred duty of the Committee to withdraw their appropriations. Students shall also cease to receive assistance when their health shall become such as to unfit them for study, and for the work of the ministry; when they are manifestly improvident, and contract debts without reasonable prospects of payment; when they marry; when they receive the assistance of any other Educational Committee; when they fail to make the regular returns or cease by change of circumstances to need aid.

14. As all intellectual acquisitions are of comparatively little value without the cultivation of piety, it is expected and required of every candidate to pay special attention to the practical duties of religion; such as reading the Scriptures, secret prayer, and meditation; attendance on religious meetings on the Sabbath, and during the week; endeavors to promote the salvation of others; and the exhibition at all times of a pious and consistent example.

Suggestions of Correspondents.

The correspondence of the Committee has already elicited a number of important facts and suggestions from which the succeeding items are selected.

One Stated Clerk writes in reply to the circular of the Committee:

"We have no regular system of action. We shall form one of some kind as soon as it is well ascertained that our church is determined to depend upon herself, and her all-sufficient Head, to prepare her ministry. We shall furthermore give it the very first place in our beneficence. We rejoice greatly in those labors which have been undertaken for the development of our Church—for bringing it to pass that she shall do her own work."

Another says:

"Nine tenths of our ministers and churches are wholly in fault in this matter. But the penalty will come. We must as a Church take hold of this work, or we will never do our part of the work of saving our country and converting the world."

A third says:

"We have many young men members of our churches, who should be in a course of preparation for the ministry; but the discouragements of the ministry are so many, and the inducements in worldly pursuits so great, that it is impossible to persuade them to a self-immolation such as they see in the scores of dismissed and turned-off ministers all over the land. There must be a returning to the old ways and a walking in the old paths, and ministers and people must be married for better or worse, as in old times. There is no other hope for our churches in the country places. The Methodist policy is rooting us out and supplanting us on all hands."

A minister whose Presbytery has just resolved to coöperate with the Permanent Committee, has well commenced the work in his congregation, as follows. He says:

"I called yesterday at the house of one of the richest members of my church. After conversation, in which he seemed very tender, he said to me: 'I have been thinking for some time that I am not doing enough for the cause of Christ, and I have come to the conclusion to educate a young man for the ministry, if I can find one of decided piety, who needs help.' He then said this was no hasty thought, but had been the growing conviction of his mind ever since he heard me preach on the subject some time ago." Are there not many other ministers who would find their members taking a similar course, if they would only "go and do likewise"?

A communication from a minister who has been engaged in carrying out a Synodical plan of action in one of the Eastern States, says:

"Our plan has had but one embarrassment, and that is the apathy of the ministry. Our churches are heart and soul with us, and so far as our ministers have done their duty,

have done well. There is a growing confidence in our plan. Since adopting it, we have had more applications for aid than we can supply. We have several applications from noble young men, but have not the means to aid them."

Concurrence of Presbyteries.

The plans of the Committee were presented by the General Secretary in April last, to the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, which thereupon adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the subject presented, namely, Education for the Ministry, is one of vital moment in the estimation of this Presbytery; that all our ministers and churches be earnestly exhorted to renewed interest and zeal in this cause; that young men of piety and talents within our bounds be affectionately urged to consider the call to the Gospel ministry, and that our people be entreated to exhibit an increased liberality in reference to the support of such candidates as may require aid.

Recommended further, that the subject of Education for the Ministry, be a standing item on the Docket of Presbytery, for each Fall stated meeting.

The Fourth Presbytery of Philadelphia adopted the following:

"The Presbytery having heard with great interest a statement from the Secretary of the General Assembly's Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry, it was

Resolved, That we approve of the plan of engaging Presbyteries and Synods in regular, systematic efforts, in behalf of the general cause of Education for the Ministry, and will be ready to coöperate in any suitable and efficient plan which may be recommended by the Assembly."

The Third Presbytery of New-York adopted similar resolutions, and appointed a committee (as did also the Presbytery of Brooklyn) to prepare a plan for coöperation with the Permanent Committee as soon as the General Assembly's action shall be laid before them.

The Presbytery of Albany, at its stated meeting at East-Nassau, June 18, 1857, after a full and animated discussion, adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1. That we approve the plan adopted by the General Assembly convened at Cleveland, for the education of young men for the ministry.

2. That we feel it to be the imperative duty of the pastors and churches to direct the attention of young men in their congregations to the ministry, and to induce them to prepare for this sacred calling.

3. That parents should be urged to consecrate their sons to the great work of preaching the Gospel.

4. That the churches are bound to contribute freely to sustain such young men in their course of studies for the ministry, and especially to pray for them, that they may be able and faithful ministers of the word.

5. That Pastors and Elders are earnestly requested to induce those young men within the bounds of this Presbytery, who have the ministry in view, to place themselves under the care of this Presbytery, rather than under the care of others.

Action of the Presbytery of Troy, July 1, 1857:

I. This Presbytery cordially approves the plan adopted by General Assembly, which aims to develop the resources of the whole Church, and bring each section of it to the work of training its own ministry.

II. The members of this Presbytery, deeply impressed with the importance of the object, pledge themselves to make efforts to interest our several congregations in this work according to recommendations of the General Assembly, and especially to endeavor to cause young men of piety, who may give promise of usefulness, to feel the importance of devoting their lives to the service of Christ in the work of the ministry.

III. This Presbytery will coöperate with the Permanent Committee of the General Assembly on the subject of Education for the Ministry; and will annually appoint a Standing Committee to act as the organ of communication between this Presbytery and the Committee of the Assembly.

IV. It shall be a standing rule of Presbytery at the winter session to make special inquiry as to what has been done during the previous year in reference to this whole subject; and also to devise measures for the most successful promotion of the object for the future.

The Plan proving Successful.

The Annual Circular of the Executive Committee of the Synods of Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, and Wabash, issued at the commencement of this year, says:

"The present organization was put into operation by a Joint Committee from these Synods, which met in Cincinnati, Oct. 30, 1855, and appointed an Executive Committee of seven, to hold their office for one year, with power to adopt rules, collect and disburse funds, and to do whatever is usually done by similar committees. This Central Committee at once set itself to the work with which it was intrusted. Although no agent was employed, yet by the coöperation of pastors and churches, the amount collected for the year 1855-6, is \$1847.75. In addition to this, larger or smaller sums are known to have been contributed, which have not been reported. The number of students aided has been twenty-five.

"The whole *expense* of collecting this sum of \$1847, was only \$28.29, or a little over one per cent. This gratifying result is to be attributed entirely to the promptness and earnestness with which the Pastors lent their aid to supply the lack of service of an agent—in several cases preaching on the subject, and taking collections in other churches beside their own.

"The above statement of what has been accomplished by the new organization, proves conclusively that *the plan will work*, and only needs to be vigorously carried out by all our ministers and churches, to put the cause of Education for the Ministry among us in a better position than it has occupied for years. What it is desirable to do the present year is:

"1st. To ascertain the actual number of its own young men, which each of our churches, since its organization, has given to the work of the Gospel Ministry. The object of this inquiry is to call the attention of the churches to the question what they have done, and are doing, to send forth, *from their own number*, ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said that the little Church of Westhampton, in Massachusetts, has already furnished for the ministry no less than twenty-seven men, one of whom was the late Dr. Edwards of Andover, whose labors in behalf of Temperance and the Sabbath were so signally blest. It needs to be felt more deeply than it generally is, that no church should be willing to *use up* a minister of Christ, when the world is perishing for the want of laborers, unless it does all in its power to raise up a successor, and if possible, provide for the wants of other churches, and for the heathen.

"2d. It is proposed to encourage promising young men to enter upon a course of study, by the assurance of aid, if absolutely needed, *while preparing for college*. Heretofore this aid has not been furnished until they were actually admitted. It is found, however, that not a few young men of talent and piety, who would gladly enter the ministry, are unable to meet the expenses of attending a Classical Preparatory School, involving, as it does in most cases, the necessity of leaving home for the purpose. It is desirable, therefore, that it should be generally known that arrangements have been made to appropriate to this class, where proper credentials of character and fitness are furnished, a sum not exceeding in each case fifty dollars a year.

"3d. It is exceedingly desirable that *every church, however small*, should take a collection for this object, not only for the sake of contributing its share, but in order to cultivate in its members a growing interest in the great work of multiplying the heralds of salvation, and leading its pious young men to consider the claims of the Christian ministry upon themselves. It is worthy of remark that no small part of those now preparing to preach the Gospel came from feeble churches, and it may be fairly presumed, that if the subject had been made more prominent in such churches, the number of candidates for the ministry would have been considerably larger.

"4th. It is hoped that many Christian men in easy circumstances, will, as several have already cheerfully done, consent to support each one student, for the year or longer. Six of these *scholarships*, as they are called, were pledged the last year—in one case two gentlemen uniting to make up the one hundred dollars required. They can be paid, either at once, or in quarterly installments, as may be preferred."

Action of the Synod of Michigan.

The Committee to whom was referred the consideration of the action of the last General Assembly, and the documents presented to the Synod by the Secretary of the Permanent Committee on Education, on the subject of training up a ministry for the churches, presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted, June 20, 1857:

"The Committee would express their gratitude to the great Head of the Church, for the unanimity and wisdom manifested by the General Assembly in the adoption of the plan they have recommended for the coöperation of the Presbyteries and Synods, in the important work of rearing and educating a ministry. It is a system wisely conceived, and well arranged in its numerous and excellent provisions. The fundamental principles it involves, are of great practical value. It avoids the dangers and disastrous results incident to the former methods of disbursing aid toward the support of poor and pious youth. So far from tending to awaken any of those unpleasant feelings apt to be produced either by a rigid system of loaning small sums with promissory notes to be repaid at some future day, or by absolute gratuity as to objects of charity, it places the young man aided, in a position which does not wound his natural and proper self-respect and laudable spirit of independence, nor necessarily awaken the painful and often deleterious emotions connected with a sense of degrading dependence; nor does it necessitate him to the practice of meanness or servility, for the attainment of an ulterior end. The Church, through the action of its several Presbyteries and congregations, upon this plan becomes, as it were, the parent nurturing and fostering her own youth, and leading them in prudent and economical methods to prosecute the work of education for the ministry. The development under God of her own resources in this respect, which may and will take place when the hearts of the pastors and members of the churches are set upon the great object of providing and educating an evangelical ministry, and where there is cherished that sense of dependence on the divine blessing and spirit which leads to habitual and earnest prayer that the Master would send forth the laborers into his vineyard—can not fail to secure in due season not only an increased number of ministers of the Gospel, but men imbued with the high and honorable feelings of devotion to the work, and attachment to the Church whose sons they are. The plan does not in the least degree interfere with the rights and separate action of our Presbyteries; but while it systematizes such action, and provides for the collection of information on the subject, of value to the whole Church, will serve to encourage and stimulate the efforts of all in leading and aiding our youth in well-directed attempts and studies to prepare themselves for the work of the ministry. It meets also those emergencies which sometimes arise where aid may become important to facilitate those advanced beyond the period of youth, and who may be called of God from secular pursuits to serve him in the gospel of his Son. The Committee recommend to the Synod the cordial adoption of the plan proposed, and the zealous coöperation with the Permanent Committee of the General Assembly, agreeably to its provisions, as preferable to all others, and present the following resolutions for consideration:

"1. *Resolved*, That the Synod of Michigan cordially approve of, and will coöperate with, the Permanent Committee of the General Assembly in the prosecution of the plan which that body has submitted to the churches under their care, for the more efficient and successful extension of aid in the education of candidates for the ministry of the Gospel.

"2. *Resolved*, That the Synod recommend to their Presbyteries diligently and systematically to attend to this matter, by appointing their own committees for prosecuting it, by making it a regular item of business at their stated meetings, to inquire, and receive reports from their committees and their churches, as to what has been and may be done in this work, and by availing themselves of the opportunity and advantages afforded to increase their efficiency by reporting to and coöperating with the Permanent Committee on Education, appointed by the General Assembly.

"3. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to all our congregations to take up an annual collection or contribution for this cause; and to the Presbyteries to encourage them to form such local organizations among themselves and their congregations, as may the more effectually and systematically secure their liberal coöperation.

"4. *Resolved*, That the Synod recommend to the Presbyteries to encourage, and endeavor to promote the cultivation of a spirit of prayer for this object, and especially by observing the day of concert of prayer for colleges set apart on the last Thursday of February in each year, and that where it is practicable and convenient, the annual collection for this object be made on the Sabbath succeeding that day.

"5. *Resolved*, That the Synod recommend to the Presbyteries to forward annually to the General Assembly, full information of all they are doing on this subject.

"6. *Resolved*, That the Synod will at each meeting set apart a time for inquiring in relation to the doings of the Presbyteries in this work, and hear their reports annually on the subject, and from time to time endeavor to promote this great cause of Christian enterprise."

IMPORTANT TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION.

THE Permanent Committee of the General Assembly is not the rival of any other educational institution, but is a co-laborer with all seeking to promote the increase of the ministry. It has a field of its own, assigned it by Providence, at present to a great extent unoccupied. In the commencement of its operations it is glad to borrow light from all sources, and it is particularly indebted to the publications of the American Education Society and the Presbyterian Board. It will always be gratified to repay its obligations as it may have means and opportunity. Several extracts, mostly from the publications of these institutions, presenting important topics of consideration to the churches and to candidates, will close this report. The first is an article published nearly twenty years ago, and is more needed now than then.

The Increase of the Ministry.

The great Head and Founder of the Church had this subject in his mind, and urged it on the attention of his disciples, while he was on earth. His commandment on this point, which is as obligatory now as it ever was, is: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." It is evident from these words, that the Lord of the harvest is able to supply the deficiency of laborers; and that he will only do it in answer to prayer. Christ could have offered a prevailing prayer for this gift, but no: Christians must pray. "*Pray ye.*" He will be inquired of for this blessing, that he may do it for us. When there is a great deficiency of faithful laborers, does it not suggest a reason for an inquiry, whether this command has been obeyed? In some cases, we can not be certain that what we ask is agreeable to the mind of God; but here, all room for doubt is removed. It is not often that Christ, in exhorting his disciples to the duty of prayer, informed them particularly what to pray for; but in this case, he puts words, as it were, into their mouth: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." It can not be, then, that He would omit to answer a prayer thus expressly dictated by himself. If there be a want of laborers, the neglect must be in the Church. The blessing has not been asked with due importunity and perseverance. The people have depended on Education Societies and Theological Seminaries to provide the candidates; and there has been but little earnest supplication to the Lord of the harvest.

Thus the matter now stands; and if this state of things continues, your Education Societies and your Theological Seminaries will soon experience a great falling off in their numbers. Let Christians know and remember, that no organized societies or seminaries, can supply this want. They may educate pious young men when they come to them, but what if the number of such shall go on diminishing every year, can they create a supply? Surely not. We must have recourse to the Lord of the harvest. Formerly, pious parents dedicated their children to this sacred service from their birth, and were incessant in their petitions at a throne of grace, for ministerial grace and gifts for their devoted sons; and such prayers God has heard and answered in thousands of instances. But where now do we find the consecrated Samuels growing up under the light of the sanctuary? Where are the Hannahs, to wrestle with God in public and private, until they obtain their heart's desire? This ought to be a weighty care with every Church of Christ. The Church can not exist without a ministry; and where are we to look for candidates for the ministry, but in the churches? Can that church have done its duty in which few or no candidates for the sacred office have been reared up? Or what judgment must be formed of those large and flourishing churches, with their hundreds of communicants, which once had a succession of young men in training for the harvest, but now have none? Perhaps it will startle some of our good people to hear it alleged as a fault, that particular churches are rearing no candidates for the ministry. But I will maintain it. There must be a

grievous fault somewhere in relation to this important concern; and as it is a matter of common duty, when there has been a continual barrenness, there must have been a want of due culture. Why have you no pious young men on their way to the ministry? Have you not many sons who, if their hearts were touched by the finger of God, might be useful? But you may say—We can not give them grace. True; this is not the ground of your accountability. But have you, as a Church, prayed for the conversion of the dear youth, that they might be prepared for this work?

Every church, rich in numbers, as well as worldly substance, which has no young men in a course of training, ought to appoint a day of fasting and humiliation, to inquire into this matter, and to beg of God not to leave them like a barren tree in his vineyard. You say that you contribute every year to the Education fund. This is well: but it is not all, nor the half of your duty on this subject. You must furnish men as well as money; and the men are by far the most important part of the means. Without suitable men, money in this concern is worthless. You must bring forward pious and promising men. Do you ask how you can accomplish this? I answer as before: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest." Do not forget to pray this prayer, as you have too often done. Think much of it, and lay it before God in secret, in your families, and in the church. And be not contented until you receive this blessing of the ascended Lord, to be the honored instrument of furnishing the harvest field with at least one laborer. There are a few churches in our land, which can number more than one devoted missionary in the foreign field. The writer knows a church of moderate size and little wealth, in a remote station, which within his recollection has furnished five or six faithful men for the work of the ministry, the bones of one of whom lie among the heathen. He could designate another place, where at least a dozen ministers have proceeded from one church, and some of them men of eminence. But alas! the glory is departed; for years past, this fruitful spot has been barren in this respect. An able and excellent minister in Virginia was snatched away from his family without a moment's warning. His children, mostly sons, were then small; now, *five* of them are laboring in the field, and possibly the sixth may enter. Do you not suppose that this was in answer to the prayers of the father?

Some people say, that there is no real deficiency, or we should not have so many unemployed ministers. It may be admitted, that if the sacred office be viewed as a secular trade, by which men may make a comfortable living, the profession is already overstocked. At any rate, it is overstocked with men who will not work—or will only work where they can find every thing ready prepared to their hand. The Church wants no *cumberers* of the ground, but *laborers*—not men who wish to enter on and enjoy the fruits of other men's labors, but *working men*, willing to break up the fallow ground, and ambitious to preach the Gospel even where Christ has not been named. No class of educated men are more to be pitied than those clergymen who are not occupied with the proper business of their profession. Although they may grow rich, (though Providence commonly thwarts their schemes and disappoints their hopes,) they are not to be envied. In fact, they lose all respectability in the eyes of the world. What would be unnoticed in another, public opinion will not tolerate in them. But to bring up such as a proof that there are supernumerary ministers, is as absurd as to plead that reapers are not wanted for a great and ripe harvest, because many idle loungers or busy triflers may be found in the country. The Lord hath spoken it: "The harvest is great and the laborers few, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.*"—Archibald Alexander, D.D.

Qualifications for the Ministry.

The qualifications for an able and faithful minister of the New Testament, are three-fold, namely, natural, acquired, and gracious. Those which are natural are:

1. A good intellectual capacity, which, without doubt, will reach mediocrity, if it does not rise above it.

2. Discretion, or a sound judgment, and a due circumspection of manners. It may be called prudence or wisdom in avoiding errors, and in selecting means to accomplish ends which are correct and proper, including also judicious self-government.

3. Good common-sense is indispensable, and of immeasurable importance. This includes more than discretion, and intends a readiness and accuracy in discerning the relations of thoughts, feelings, and actions, by which a man acquires a correct knowledge of men and things in their character and tendencies, in judging of the proprieties of social intercourse; and a facility in accommodating himself to the circumstances, habits, and even prejudices of men. It is sometimes described by its practical result—a correct knowledge of human nature.

4. A competent readiness of speech both in the construction and command of the organs, and in the communication of thoughts.
5. A physical constitution capable of enduring vigorous bodily and mental effort.

Those which are acquired, are:

1. Self-control, or the government of the appetites, passions, and tongue. Those who are to be examples to believers in word, in deportment, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, must learn the arts of self-government, or they can not have good reasons to consider themselves called of God to the ministry.

2. Habits of diligence, and facility of acquiring knowledge. Christ has no use for idle drones, and men of sluggish minds, in this laborious service. The greatest portion of a minister's time for study consists of fragments and short intervals between the active duties of pastoral labor, and if, for want of diligence, facility of learning, and intensity of thought, these are not improved, his profiting will not appear to any.

Those which are gracious, may be summed up in a *living, active, controlling, and consistent piety*.

1. It must be *living and active*. Weak graces may support a man through an even and common course of duty; and a little strength may bear a light burden. But it is no even course of duty, no light burden that rests on the minister of Jesus Christ.

2. It must be *consistent and controlling* in its influence over the feelings and passions, over the desires and volitions, over the daily habits and enterprises. The ministry adapted to the present state of the Church and the world, must be actuated by great self-denial, burning zeal, and a firm reliance on the grace of God, all evinced by a consistent deportment, persevering watchfulness, and fervent prayer.

A CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

Not one nor all the qualifications now mentioned, can constitute a call to the ministry, but they are prerequisites which must exist in a fair degree, or no call can be proved. *The call consists in the influence of the Holy Ghost enlightening the mind to apprehend the duty, and directing the feelings to desire and seek to be employed by Christ in the holy ministry.* Nothing can be substituted in the place of this. The character of the candidate's *views* should be scrutinized with the utmost care, great seriousness, and earnest, persevering prayer for divine directions. The test by which they are all to be estimated, is the revealed will of God. No preconceived apprehensions of the nature, responsibility, pleasures or privations of the ministerial office, can be admitted as the rule of estimation. The rule is prescribed in the Gospel, and must not be forsaken; the whole directions relating to the subject, must be consulted; the terms of the commission; the instructions by precept and example, for its execution; and the account to be rendered.

The *feelings* must be those of commiseration for perishing sinners, great anxiety for their salvation, a tender regard for the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and a serious earnestness to be instrumental in promoting the glory of God. The ministry must not be desired ultimately nor principally for the sake of gratifying friends, nor for gaining advantages of study and mental improvement; nor for the sake of ease, emolument, or respectability; nor for gratifying a taste for argument, philosophy, or eloquence; but with singleness of heart to please God. This desire for the ministry, excited by divine influence, will frequently arise, and be associated with the most serious moments and duties. It will often kindle into earnestness in the exercises of devotion, in reading God's word, and in contemplating the great want of ministers in the Church, and in missionary fields. The strength, as well as the purity and frequency of this desire, should be particularly observed. Those who are called by the Spirit of God, will feel neither faint nor sluggish wishes, but strong aspirations of the heart, often eager, energetic, and absorbing, carrying them often before the mercy-seat to plead for direction. The desire often becomes so strong and eager that no difficulty can discourage hope, no effort can banish the anxiety, and no object can divert the mind from its absorbing interest in the question. This may not be the constant and uniform character of the desire, but if difficulties and doubts attend the inquiry, the strength of the anxiety will increase; and whatever may be the intervals of anxiety, the intensity of the feelings will increase at each recurrence. The detections of unhallowed, ambitious feelings in the heart, is not conclusive evidence that God has not called a man to his work; but if they predominate, and form a prevailing *habit* of the mind, they are utterly inconsistent with the supposition of a call from God. They belong not to the class of feelings and desires induced by his Spirit: they militate against the evidence of a call, so far as they become habitual or strong, or are indulged.—*Abridged from the Biblical Repertory.*

Motives for entering the Ministry.

Much has been said, of late, respecting the reasons why young men, in larger numbers, do not offer themselves for the work of the ministry, and many are disposed to think, that the causes of this state of things are to be found, principally, in the hardships incidental to the ministerial life, and to insufficient support. In the various discussions upon this subject, which have been going on in the public journals, these earthly motives, as it seems to us, have held quite too prominent a place; tending to make young men feel that they are justly excused for standing aloof, unless the way can be made very smooth and easy for them. There is no little danger in allowing this class of motives to mingle largely in the appeal which is made to young men, upon this subject. The minds that can be effectually reached by another and a far higher class of motives, are the minds which we most desire to influence and direct toward the work of the ministry. The true standard of ministerial support, is doubtless that which will conduce most directly to spiritual success; and we have no doubt that, in the great majority of cases in this country, this success would be better secured by somewhat larger salaries. At the same time, we would do nothing to excuse young men from the obligation that rests upon them to labor in this sacred profession. It is a work which God has appointed to be done upon the earth; and a young man of right character and right views, will feel the pressure of this great motive upon him, and will go forward trusting in the Lord for the result.—*Thirty-Seventh Report Am. Ed. Soc.*

Character of Young Men who should be aided.

The Board are becoming, every year, more and more impressed with the importance of exercising great wisdom and firmness, in accepting and refusing candidates for beneficiary aid. It is not every young man, though ardently pious and earnestly desirous of the ministry, who should be encouraged to prepare for its duties. The Church needs for this office her choicest sons. She wants men of good physical constitution, of shrewd discernment, of sound judgment, of a penetrating, comprehensive, and well-balanced mind, and free from evil idiosyncrasies and erratic tendencies. She needs MEN, true men, whole men, earnest men; though, above all things, blameless and godly men. And she needs men who will not pusillanimously linger about the graves of their fathers, if not needed at home, or wait for the old ministers to die, that they may occupy their places and get bread; but who have the hardihood, for Christ's sake, to adventure themselves upon foreign countries or upon the distant cities and wilds of their own. The feeble, the vacillating, the doltish, such as are too easily imposed upon; those who are incorrigibly and naturally men of but one idea, the vain and the perverse, the prodigal and inconsistent, as well as all decidedly destitute of piety, had better be anywhere than in the ministry.

When our beneficiaries are of the right stamp, they should be treated with great delicacy and consideration. The bearing of the churches towards them should not be that of exacting patronage, but confidence and gratitude. The aid bestowed should be so given as not to diminish the self-respect of honorable and sensitive natures, nor lead the assisted to feel that they are brought under any irksome obligations to men. The truth is, and must be felt, that the churches themselves are the true beneficiaries, and that those who receive aid to qualify themselves for doing what is as much our work as theirs, must make, after all, more than nineteen twentieths of the common sacrifice.—*Thirty-Fifth Annual Rep. Am. Ed. Soc.*

A High Standard of Piety needed.

We must encourage and demand, in the rising ministry an elevated tone of piety. Let pastors seek for the most decisive evidence of piety in all those among the youth of their flocks who would set their faces toward this work. Let not a mere common-place, much less a suspicious kind of experience pass. Let there be no reason to doubt of their spiritual call. Let their piety be characterized by the great qualities of a broken spirit before God; self-sacrifice for the cause of Christ; compassion for the souls of men; an unction from the Holy One. The Saviour considers it as no loss, when an ambitious, covetous, or worldly-minded man is discouraged from entering the ministry. His true-hearted servants, though few, are a mightier band without the addition of such than with it.

It is important, too, in connection with this grand pre-requisite, to secure such native ability and force of mind as the exercise of this high function must demand. God no more

calls to the ministry those whom he has not endowed for it by nature, than those whom he has not renewed by grace. A preëminent degree of zeal and efficiency in this work is needed, both to compensate for inadequacy of numbers and to attract powerfully to it a host of kindred spirits.—*Thirty-Third Rep. Am. Ed. Soc.*

Duty of Ministers.

Another cause, working largely and disastrously against an increase in the ministerial ranks is the WANT OF STEADY AND PERSEVERING ATTENTION TO THIS WHOLE SUBJECT ON THE PART OF THE MINISTRY.

1. Ministers have great responsibilities in regard to the increase of their profession *through the influences of the pulpit*. The sanctuary of God is a great place of human instruction. All that concerns Christian duty should receive due attention in its season; and the rightly dividing of the word of truth surely implies spiritual instruction on the topics connected with the perpetuation of the Christian ministry.

2. Training the young men of the Church to *activity in well-doing*, has an important use in leading some, or many, of them into the ministerial office. If the smallest providential incidents sometimes give a direction to Christian character, who can estimate the importance of habits of enterprise and labors of love into which the young disciple is carefully trained? The superintendent or teacher of a Sunday-school, the distributor of tracts, the visitor of the poor, the collector for the schemes of the Church, may often receive impressions of the dignity and excellence of Christian service, which gradually unfold to his mind the consideration of the work of the ministry. And it may be added that such training, under pastoral supervision, not only tends to increase the number of ministers, but to give them better qualifications for the office than they could otherwise ever possess.

3. Another point, requiring steady attention on the part of ministers, is the *selection and oversight of young men of promise*, whose general character affords good reason to believe that they may, under divine grace, become useful ministers. Great caution is, indeed, necessary on this subject, but such caution as the servant of Christ may use for the edification of the Church. Many a young man has been led forward in his preparatory studies by the intervention of others, and especially of his pastor; and there can not be a doubt that a wide field of usefulness is here opened for every minister to whom God may give a willing mind.

4. Another mode in which a pastor may effectually promote the increase of the ministry, is by causing the *claims of all the Boards of the Church*, and, of course, of the *Board of Education*, to be presented, annually, to his congregation. The people take an interest in operations they assist in promoting. Their minds become expanded, and their hearts warmed by the things of the kingdom of Christ. And one great advantage in allowing these general claims to be unfolded, consists in the evangelical discussions, the statistical details, and the knowledge communicated to the people on points of duty not commonly dwelt upon on ordinary occasions. A congregation, ignorant of evangelical operations, will send out few ministers.

In short, the regular attention of our ministers to this great subject, in all the variety of its topics and incidents, is of indispensable necessity as the means of contributing to an increase of candidates.—*Thirty-Third Ann. Rep. Presb. Board.*

Pastors, Presbyteries, and Teachers.

Among the methods, which the Presbyterian Church employs to exercise a salutary influence over her students, the first in order is the agency of the *Pastors* and sessions of the churches to which the students belong. The pastor is naturally the spiritual adviser and friend of a young man who has the ministry in view. He becomes acquainted with his religious character, his capabilities, his adaptations, his youthful desires and struggles, his mental and moral peculiarities; and thus is in a position to render him valuable counsel. Indeed, it were highly desirable that our pastors sustained a close intercourse with the students of their congregations. Young men are usually susceptible to the kind influences of those who are over them in the Lord; and few can gain so familiar access to them, and are likely to benefit so much their general character, as the pastors whom they confide in and love.

Next in order are the *Presbyteries*, who are officially charged with the oversight of all candidates taken under their care. These bodies are able to exert a happy influence over

their candidates, by the solemnity of the exercises and examinations, which occur from time to time throughout the preparatory course. The Education Committees of the Presbyteries sometimes have it in their power to interpose their counsel at periods requiring special consultation. Some of the Presbyteries adopt the excellent rule of requiring their candidates to appear before them in person, at least once every year, and to send a written statement of their progress, and of their general views, at the other Presbyterial meeting, if absent from it. The care of the Church through the Presbyteries ought to be exercised with zeal and perseverance. It is a great practical error to commit the oversight of students to any quarter outside of the Presbyteries, in a way that interferes with regular Presbyterial supervision. According to our form of government, the Presbyteries are the source of all authority in the matter; and the Church can never wisely lodge the practical administration of this authority in other hands, not in strict subordination to its own.

Professors in Seminaries and Colleges, and *Teachers* in Academies, assist in carrying on the work of superintending candidates. The nature of their vocation brings them into contact with the students, and they enjoy peculiar opportunities of discovering their characteristics and of promoting their improvement. The religious influence of the instructor is highly important in nurturing the piety of candidates; and there is no class of young men who are more ready to derive benefit from the faithful efforts of religious zeal. It will be a happy day for the Church when religious instruction and pastoral intercourse shall go hand in hand with mental development in all our institutions of learning. Great improvement has taken place in this respect within a few years, but there is much room for further progress. The Church has always depended upon the teachers of her candidates to supervise their mental and moral discipline, and to give the requisite information of their progress or shortcomings to the proper ecclesiastical authorities.—*Thirty-Sixth Ann. Rep. Pres. Board.*

All Classes of Young Men needed.

The mere distribution of the funds for the education of the indigent is but *one* of the subordinate means to supply the Church with ministers of the right character. Whenever she places an undue reliance for ministerial strength on the gratuitous education of her indigent sons, she will interfere with that divine system of motives, means, and ends, whose perfection consists in natural development and uniform growth. It is quite probable, if not altogether certain, that the importance and dignity of the ministry, and the obligations to enter upon its work, have not been sufficiently realized by *all* our pious and capable youth. The great work of ministerial education can be carried on successfully only by a wise regard to each and all the sources of supply which the grace of God permits the Church to trust in. Why should so few, comparatively, of our candidates come from the strong, sober-minded, and ever-to-be honored middle classes of society—from those who, having neither the luxuries of wealth nor the miseries of poverty to depreciate character and degrade high aims, are in that condition of God-blessed competence which creates the obligation and secures the power, ordinarily, of accomplishing much for the Church and the world? Nor should the rich be lost sight of in providing a ministry, which shall be “all things to all men.” Although the wise, the mighty, and the noble are the last and the most dangerous class on whom the Church can place dependence in spiritual things, nevertheless God condescends to men of high as well as of low estate, and with him “all things are possible.” Our true course is, to endeavor, in the light of the word of God, to produce the impression upon young men, of all classes and ranks of life, that “he that desires the office of a bishop, desireth a good work;” that it is the duty of the Church to “preach the Gospel to every creature;” that all our qualified youth who have been called by the Spirit to accept of Christ as their Redeemer should earnestly ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”—and that parents, teachers, companions, and pastors should keep the subject of the ministry as a prominent and sacred object of contemplation before all upon whom the office may seem to have scriptural claims.—*Thirty-Second Ann. Rep. Pres. Board.*

Importance of Care in selecting Candidates.

An important means of providing an able and faithful ministry is, *fidelity on the part of the Judicatories of the Church in guarding the entrance into the sacred office.* However vigilantly and perseveringly other means may be employed, if there be a failure here, the most calamitous consequences may be expected. If Presbyteries be superficial in their *examinations* of candidates; if they be too ready to lay hands on the *weak*, the *ignorant*,

the *erroneous*, or those of *doubtful piety*; or if, for the sake of attaining an occasional purpose, or meeting a temporary difficulty, they at any time suffer the barriers which have been erected for excluding the incompetent or the unworthy, to be removed or trampled down, they are taking the direct course to bring the ministry and religion into contempt.

On this subject, pleas are often urged which it is extremely difficult to resist. Some good qualities in the candidates; private friendships; and unwillingness to give pain; the scarcity of ministers, and the necessities of the Church, are all alternately employed as arguments for the admission of unsuitable characters into the ministry. But it is a most important part of fidelity in the work of the Lord, to oppose and reject every plea of this kind. Private friendships ought not to interfere with a supreme regard to the Redeemer's kingdom. It is better, much better, to inflict pain for a time, on an individual, than to wound the Church of Christ. And by introducing into the ministry those who are neither *faithful* nor *able to teach*, judicatories are so far from supplying the wants of the Church, that they rather add to her difficulties, and call her to struggle with new evils. To be *in haste* to multiply and send out unqualified laborers, is to take the most direct method to send a destructive blast on the garden of God, instead of gathering a rich and smiling harvest. On the other hand, when judicatories, with enlightened vigilance and fidelity, guard the entrance into the sacred office; when they exert the authority committed to them, to keep out of the ministry incompetence, heresy, levity, and worldly-mindedness, they obey a divine precept, they support the real honor of the Gospel ministry; they constrain those who are looking toward that blessed work to take a higher aim and to seek for higher attainments; they give the churches *bread instead of a stone, and fish instead of a serpent*; and though they may appear to those who *make haste*, to be tardy in supplying the public demand for ministers, they are taking one of the most effectual methods, under God, for raising up a *numerous*, as well as an *able and faithful ministry*.—Rev. Dr. Miller.

Household Influences necessary.

IMPERFECT ATTENTION TO HOUSEHOLD DEDICATION AND TO THE TRAINING OF THE YOUTH OF THE CHURCH, is another of the more obvious causes of a ministry of impeded growth. The household arrangement, including parental authority, family ties, reciprocal affection, the dependence of children, etc., is one of the most hopeful reliances of Christianity. God has ordained blessings for the world through the benign influences of Christian homes. How few of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church have not felt the constraining energy of parental consecration and training, in the formation of character, and in the choice of their profession! Pious fathers and mothers, with the earnest solicitude of Christian zeal, have been the instruments in the hands of Providence in giving a scriptural direction to the habits and aims of their children, which God has afterwards sanctified by bringing many of them into the ministry.

Any considerable improvement, either in the number or character of our ministry, must depend upon the increased cultivation of the opportunities afforded by Divine Providence for household nurture. Here is one of the great defects of our Church. Children are too frequently allowed to grow up without a religious bias; with minds too unimbued with the spirit and principles of Christ; and even where a religious education has been systematically carried forward, there is too often cherished on the part of parents a disinclination towards the sacred profession. The true power of family training on the increase of the ministry has never yet been fully realized. It will be a glorious day in Zion when fathers and mothers shall imbibe the spirit of holy Hannah, and early consecrate their offspring to the Lord of the harvest; when every Christian home shall endeavor to obtain for the Church the blessing of a Christian minister, and when the real resources of the family shall be developed in all the richness of evangelical faith, and in all the abundance of sanctified education.—*Thirty-Third Ann. Rep. Presb. Board.*

A Point to be guarded.

I can not help bearing testimony against what appears to me a dangerous mistake; which, though it may not be common, yet sometimes occurs among parents and guardians of the more serious class. I mean the mistake of *destining* young persons to the Gospel ministry, from a very early period of life, before they can be supposed, from any enlightened view of the subject, to concur in the choice themselves; and before they give any satisfactory evidence of vital piety. I venerate the parent who desires, and daily prays, that it may please God to prepare and dispose his child to serve him in *the ministry of recon-*

ciliation. Nay, I think that parent worthy of the thanks of every friend to religion, who solemnly devotes his child, even from the earliest period of life, to the service of the Church, and avowedly conducts every part of his education with a view to this great object; provided the original consecration, and every subsequent arrangement, be made on the condition, carefully and frequently *expressed* as well as *implied*, that God shall be pleased to sanction and accept the offering, by imparting his grace, and giving a heart to love and desire the sacred work. But there is a wide difference between this and resolving that a particular son shall be a minister, in the same manner, and on the same principles, as another is devoted to the medical profession or to the bar, as a respectable employment in life; without recognizing vital piety, and the deliberate choice of the ministry, from religious motives, as indispensable qualifications. This kind of destination to the sacred office, is as dangerous as it is unwarranted. Let the Christian parent, however solemnly he may have devoted his child to the work of the ministry, and however fondly he may have anticipated his entrance on that blessed work; if he find, at the proper age for deciding the question, no comfortable evidence of a heart regenerated and governed by the Spirit of grace, let him deliberately advise—though his heart be wrung with anguish by the sacrifice—let him deliberately advise the choice of another profession. When young men begin to enter the Gospel ministry, because they were early destined to the office, because it is a respectable profession, or because they wish to gratify parents and friends; rather than because they love the office and its work, and have reason to hope that God has been pleased to *call them by his grace, and reveal his Son in them*; we may consider the ministry as in a fair way to be made, in fact, a *secular* employment, and the Church a prostituted theatre for the schemes and ambition of worldly men.—*Rev. Dr. Miller.*

The Churches must send forth Ministers.

There is a very wide difference among the churches of New-England in respect to the number of ministers which they have raised up and sent forth into the world. There are individual churches in New-England, which, during the whole term of their existence, have produced *twenty, thirty*, and in one instance, at least, even *forty* ministers; while there are others that have produced very few, and in some cases none at all. It is not a mere matter of chance, that one church has sent out twenty men, as living preachers of the cross of Christ, while another church, of about the same number, and similarly situated, so far as outward circumstances are concerned, has not sent one, or at most but one or two. There was in the first-named church, a yearning desire for the advancement of Christ's cause—a strong wish to reach forth, with a Christian influence, upon the world; and this state of general desire has taken effect upon the hearts of the young men in the Church, and finds its development through them—so that it is, after all, the Church that raises up ministers—it is the Church that sends forth missionaries; or if there is a lack of ministers and missionaries, it is the Church that is to be held responsible for the want. In all our inquiries, therefore, respecting a ministerial supply, we should go to the fountain-head; we should come back among the churches; and if there is a right state of feeling, then all things outward will regulate and adjust themselves.—*Forty-First Annual Report Am. Ed. Soc.*

Results of Educational Effort.

No more impressive argument can be brought forward to show the usefulness of this Society, than simply to present the record of what it has already done—the part it has borne in furnishing the ministers who are now upon the stage of action, bearing the burden and heat of the day. In the States of New-Hampshire and Vermont, not far from *two fifths* of the Congregational ministers now in the field, are men who were aided in their education by this Society. In Maine, about *one half* of the Congregational ministers are in the same category. In Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, the proportion is slightly less—not far from *one third*. As stated in another part of the Report, about *one half* of all the ordained missionaries now under the care of the American Board, are our former beneficiaries, and about *one third* of all the men employed by the Home Missionary Society. Through the whole field of the New School Presbyterian Church in this country, it will be found that from *one quarter* to *one third* of all the ministers are those who received the assistance of this Society, in their course of education. Besides all these, there will be found scattered through the Old School Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Lutheran, and other evangelical churches, a very large number of men who were thus assisted. This is our force now in the field, and it constitutes a very strong element in the present working power of the American churches.—*Forty-First Annual Rep. Am. Ed. Soc.*

The Gifts of Poverty to the Church.

The gifts of poverty are the richest gifts to the churches. I refer not now to the widow's mites, richer though they be than all the gifts of wealth; but to gifts richer even than the widow's mite. A few years ago, on a wintry morning, a boy in the habiliments of poverty entered an old school-house among our western mountains, and avowed to the master his desire for an education. There was poverty laying one of her richest gifts on the altar of religion; for that boy was JONAS KING. On his humble shoemaker's bench, CAREY laid the foundation of British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then glowing with new-born love to Christ. He took him to John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety, and whose beneficence, increase together. They educated him; and that boy became CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, whose name India will bless, when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. JOHN BUNYAN was a gift of poverty to the Church. ZWINGLE came forth from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; MELANCTHON from an armorer's workshop; LUTHER from a miner's cottage; the Apostles, some of them, from fishermen's huts. These are the gifts of poverty to the Church. It is the honored office of the Education Society, to be the almoner of gifts like these; to take these diamonds in the rough, and polish them to sparkle among the jewels of the Saviour's crown.—*Rev. Dr. Harris, of Bangor, Me.*

Privilege of preaching the Gospel.

There has been so much said and written within a few years past, respecting the trials and troubles incident to the life of a minister, that the young men connected with our churches, who ought to come forward for the work, allow themselves to dwell upon this "shady side" of the picture, and they forget what a blessed privilege it is to preach the Gospel. How many a minister, when he has had reason to know that God was employing his humble services for the conviction and conversion of sinners; when he has seen burdened and anxious souls turning meekly and confidingly to him for counsel and guidance; and when, under his instructions, and by the workings of the divine Spirit, he has seen these souls coming out into the light and liberty and joy of the Gospel; how many a minister has felt that there is no work which, for dignity, could be compared with this, and that there is no position in life, which he would exchange for this. This is the view which Christian parents ought to take of the ministry, as a sphere of activity for their sons. They ought to count it the greatest honor to have their sons give themselves earnestly to this high calling. But how often are they tempted to desire for them the good things of this life—places of wealth, of honor, of earthly comfort. And their sons, catching this spirit, are unmanned and enervated. They lose their courage and strength of purpose for any great work, and float along with the world, in the tide of business, when they ought to be employed for God and the truth. Now it is of little use for any man to plan how he may escape hardship and trial in this life, and may live in ease and quietness. God can follow any young man, who turns aside from duty under this influence, as he followed Jonah, when he attempted to escape from the work to which he was appointed. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," said Christ to his disciples, "but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." There is a pleasure in duty; a pleasure in working for God, and doing his will, which is a rich and ample compensation for all the sorrows and troubles which must be encountered. And "he that will save his life, shall lose it," God will thwart him in his purposes, and he will find that the path of obedience is the path of peace.

It is greatly to be desired that the young men in our churches, who are just coming forward in life, should be lifted up to this view of the subject—that they should feel that it is not an act of condescension, on their part, if they are willing to take upon themselves the ministerial work, but that God has no more high and honorable place—none that one ought more earnestly to covet, than the position of a Christian minister. They need a great deal more of that spirit which animated the great Apostle to the Gentiles, when he said: "For necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."—*Forty-First Am. Rep. Am. Ed. Soc.*

A Solemn and Earnest Call to Prayer.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

"THE harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Thus spoke the Saviour of the world, when he saw the multitude willing to receive instruction, and the paucity of teachers ready and competent to impart it. The scene moved his loving heart to compassion. Instead of miraculously raising up an army of laborers, which he easily could have done, he laid it upon the conscience of his people to pray for them, and made the supply dependent upon their supplications; and thus, to a certain extent, makes them responsible for an adequate and efficient ministry. I have been of late deeply and solemnly impressed with the importance and necessity of this injunction of our Lord, and equally so with the fact that it is generally and astoundingly neglected. I repeat the assertion to draw attention to the fact—it is *generally and astoundingly neglected*. How rarely is it the subject of ministerial petition in our public assemblies; of the prayers of the brethren at our social meetings; of heads of families at the domestic altar, or of individuals in their closet exercises. I put it to all who may read this paper to inquire how often they hear it mentioned in associate devotion, and how often *they* make it the subject of their own. The whole matter of the ministry seems, by common consent, to be all but excluded from our prayers.

If ever there was a time when the people of God should lie down upon their faces, imploring with all the importunity, boldness, and perseverance of faith, for a larger supply of ministers, each full of the Holy Ghost, as was Barnabas and Paul, it is the period that is now passing over us. And yet the Lord's people are silent; or, if not silent, satisfy themselves with a few formal, lukewarm petitions, destitute alike of faith and fervor.

The office is of Christ's appointing, the qualification of his working, and the call of his giving. How fervently, believingly, and constantly, should our prayers, therefore, be directed to him for the supply of ministers. Prayer is an intelligent, believing, and practical acknowledgment of him as head over all things to his Church. Did he not ascend up on high, having obtained gifts for men, to give "pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ?" Surely this not only teaches us the duty of prayer in reference to this subject, but makes it obligatory upon us. The gift of faithful pastors is his divine prerogative, and an act of his power and grace. The Church, measuring her Lord's ability and grace by her own narrow views and limited means, has but a faint conception of her Lord's inexhaustible resources. Her prayers have been in proportion to her own views, and not to his loving heart and mighty arm. She has appeared afraid of excess in her petitions when she has, in fact, comparatively asked nothing. Why should she not prepare herself to ask and to expect a ministry as large as the wants of men, and as excellent as that of the apostolic age? Why, Christ ascended up on high to give such a ministry, and is only waiting for the believing prayers of his Church to bestow it.

The prayer for such a blessing should be *general* and *importunate*. It is a subject demanding the solemn attention of every minister and every member of every Christian church. It is a duty from the obligations of which none are exempt. It is not to be left to the preacher and the pulpit, but the whole body of the faithful should be engaged in wrestling supplication for this blessing. Ministers, of course, must lead, and, instead of a cold, occasional, and heartless reference to the subject, they should breathe out such entreaties in the hearing of their people as should enkindle the flame of devotion in a whole church. If it is true in reference to any thing, it is true in reference to this, that man "ought always to pray, and not to faint." The utmost importunity should characterize our prayers.

We have only to dwell upon the magnitude, the richness, and the necessity of the blessing, to see the importance of this. The churches are to be supported in vigor, and the world is to be converted principally by preaching, and by preaching adapted to accomplish the mighty result. We do not under-estimate the power of the press and the advantages of education; but these will never supersede nor surpass the influence of the pulpit. The ministry of the word will ever remain God's chief instrument for working out the plans and purposes of his grace towards this revolted world. Every thing is standing still, or only moving slowly on for want of an adequate number of earnest preachers of the Gospel. The harvest is perishing on the ground for want of hands to get it in.

The age is wonderful, and we want men for the age. God is telling us by the signs of the times, what kind of ministers are wanting. He is lifting up a voice on this subject

which grows louder and louder continually, as if he meant that it should at last be heard. But it is not *yet* heard. No response is given; no loud, general, persevering cry is going up to heaven, saying: "Send more laborers into the harvest!" Christians are satisfied with giving money, attending meetings, hearing speeches, but they do not pray in equal proportion. God is not acknowledged, the Spirit is not implored. The giving age and the working age *are* happily come, but the praying age is *yet* to come. We hope it is coming, though there are not many indications of it at present.

Let me then send out the call over our land for more prayer on behalf of a supply of ministers. Oh! if all pulpits, all social meetings, all family altars, all closets, were from this hour solemnly, earnestly, importunately consecrated to this work of praying to the Lord of the harvest for more laborers, what a revival would take place both in the Church and in the world! Oh! what an amount of beneficent power would be exerted on the destinies of the whole earth's population, if we should henceforth witness these scenes of importunate and wrestling supplication! What students would fill our colleges! what ministers would occupy our pulpits! what pastors would preside over our churches! How should we break forth on the right hand and on the left! Let the whole Church, then continually lift up its hands, its heart, its eyes to Heaven, in imploring cries for this great blessing.

But as we are to *seek*, as well as *ask*, there is something else for us to do besides *praying* for ministers, and that is to *look out for them*. Christ's bounty in giving pastors and teachers does not at all supersede our duty in endeavoring to obtain them. I hold it to be a solemn duty on the part of the pastors and their churches to look among their members for young men of eminent piety, good physical qualifications, competent abilities, and great devotedness. Christ may, and often does, say through the pastors to a selected youth: "Son, go work in my vineyard." It ought not to be left in all cases to an impulse from within, but the desire may be in some persons awakened by a call from without. In many of our churches young men are to be found in whose hearts a secret desire is cherished, but repressed by modesty, to be engaged in the work; while there are others also, who, though they had never felt such a desire in a definite form, would, on its being presented to them, immediately embrace it. Great care, however, should be taken, that incompetent men are not selected. The most ardent piety without physical qualifications and competent abilities, will not do for the work of the ministry at any time, much less in such times as these. We had better send none to college than men not up to the right standard. We have already hundreds of men who are doing nothing, and who are standing in the way of others. We must pick out the best and most devoted men that our churches contain. A pastor should be as intimately acquainted as possible with all the young men in his church, and should take under his care and training any one whom he deems eminently qualified for the work of the ministry. It is to be regretted that our more wealthy families have little sympathy with the Apostle or his views, where he says: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

In conclusion, I most earnestly call upon all who feel interested in the welfare of our own denomination in particular—in the prosperity of the universal Church, or in the conversion of the world to Christ; upon all who own subjection to the Redeemer's commands or sympathize with him in the desires of his immaculate and loving heart; upon all who see the connection of an adequate and efficient ministry with the support and advancement of Christ's kingdom in our world—to consider from henceforth more deeply, solemnly, and practically than before, the necessity and importance of believing, importunate, and persevering prayer for the Lord to send more laborers into the harvest. Alas! alas! we are all too busy to pray. We can find time and inclination for any thing rather than this. And yet, is not prayer the very lock of our strength, *the secret of our success*? Let us begin a new era in the history of religious activities, which, without being attended with any decay of zeal and liberality, shall be characterized by a spirit of deep devotion and earnest supplication. Let the end of averseness to prayer be now come, and a wrestling spirit begin its mighty power and prevalence with God.

Conclusion.

As the duty of presenting the foregoing plan to the churches, and urging its adoption by them, is devolved on the General Secretary, he will close this pamphlet with a few brief suggestions.

1. While the plan is ecclesiastical in the sense that it would render our Presbyteries *de facto* educational institutions, it is voluntary in that it leaves each free to follow its convictions of duty in the matter, and to choose its own method of operations. The scheme will have just the efficiency and success the Presbyteries choose to give it, and no more.

2. This plan takes all responsibility for the characters of the young men introduced into the ministry from the Permanent Committee, and places it where it justly belongs, on the Presbyteries; requiring them not only to recommend candidates, but to maintain, as far as possible, a careful pastoral supervision over them. If the rising ministry shall prove incompetent, the Church will have no one but herself to blame for it.

3. The success of the plan requires the coöperation of the whole Church, so that the abundance of the wealthy may supply those who are in want. It also requires that no part shall be satisfied with doing its own work and providing for its own wants, if it is able to do more. The newer regions of our country will demand assistance in training an indigenous ministry for years to come.

4. As to the place this shall hold among other enterprises of benevolence, the Secretary suggests that, as it deserves, it shall be ranked *first*. After the written word, the ministry is the divinely appointed means of saving men. Without an increase in the ministry, we can have no adequate supply of home or foreign missionaries, and every department of religious effort must languish. Already, in many parts of our Church, aggression on the kingdom of darkness is impossible, and even the struggle for continued existence has commenced, because ministers are so scarce.

5. As the Permanent Committee have no invested funds on which they can draw to aid young men, it is necessary that the coöperation of Presbyteries should be in the way of furnishing funds as well as receiving them; and that as applications are sent for aid, they should be accompanied with the assurance that the Presbytery is doing all that can reasonably be expected of it in this respect.

6. It is the expectation of the Secretary to visit the Presbyteries and Synods throughout the Church, as fast and as far as he may be able to do so, "for the purpose of awakening the interest and concentrating the energies of the whole Church." He hopes none of them will delay action if he should not reach them at an early day. It is his main duty to excite others to engage in educational work, and aid and guide them in it if desired, rather than to do such work directly himself. The Church will never have a sufficient ministry till each man shall do his own work. Self-development, under God, is the absolute condition of safe progress.

7. With the alarming practical indifference which prevails on this subject, it will require the patient, painful, protracted labor of years to bring it up to its proper position. Let hasty and premature judgments concerning it be avoided. The work is God's; the call to the Church, in his providence, at present to undertake it, is loud and imperative; and as certainly and rapidly as his people shall come to his help in this matter, he will crown their labors with his blessing.

LEGACIES.

We trust many will be inclined to continue doing good after their removal from earth, by affording the Committee the means to train up a living ministry. After the present year the Permanent Committee will be incorporated, so that they can receive and manage bequests. In the mean time should any desire to make a provision of this description, let them consult some competent lawyer in writing their wills, and adopt, substantially, the following form:

"I give and bequeath to the Trustees of the Presbyterian House, incorporated April 21st, 1855, by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, the sum of _____ dollars, to be expended under the direction and for the appropriate uses of the Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America."

The above-named Trustees have ample power to hold any funds for the uses of the General Assembly.